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ABSTRACT

Twelve instructional modules for Project BECOMING were administered to an undergraduate class of elementary education majors as part of their social studies methods course, in order to promote sex blindness, prevent sex-role stereotyping, and develop teachers who were supportive of students trying out new roles. The modules included: Values Education (Picturing Yourself, Sorting Out Your Values); Analysis of Textbooks and Classrooms for Sex Discrimination; and Teaching Strategies (Hypothesizing from Facts, Interpreting Written Material, Interpreting Graphic Information, Decision Making, Making Inferences, Observation Skills; Case Study, and Role Playing). Pretests and post tests were administered to the experimental group and to three comparison groups. All four groups were found to be neither traditional nor clearly nontraditional in their attitudes toward sex roles. Significant differences were found between groups only on one of three post tests. Lesson plans developed by those in the experimental group much more often actively encouraged and supported their students' considering and trying out nontraditional career roles. The preservice teachers did not show evidence of willingness to advocate changes in the traditional family roles of parents and spouses. (Author/CTM)

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Evaluation of Modules on Sex Role Stereotyping Integrated into Preservice Elementary Teacher Education

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Many contemporary events have awakened our concern about sex role stereotyping in the schools; and Title IX and other legislation and litigation have prohibited certain practices. However, legal resources have not been able to (and probably should not be able to) dictate and define the classroom relationship of student and teacher in regard to sex role stereotyping. Teacher education provides one avenue in which to influence this student-teacher relationship. In this vein, special courses on sexism have sprouted up around the country, but their relatively small enrollments (McCune & Matthews, 1975) implies that most preservice teachers have not been instructed on topics involving sex role stereotyping in the school. Because of this small enrollment (and for reasons we have described elsewhere (Smith, 1977)), we sought to develop instruction on sex role stereotyping which could be directly and easily included in the typical undergraduate elementary social studies teaching methodology course. The evaluation of those instructional modules is reported here.

Module Objectives - We hypothesized four levels of objectives as necessary in order to produce preservice elementary teachers who were sex blind and supportive of students considering and/or trying out new roles. We hypothesized that our students would first have to examine, and perhaps change, their attitude toward their own and others' roles as parent, spouse, career person, and citizen. Secondly, they would need to acquire some knowledge of sex role stereotyping in the school; and finally, they would need to learn how to be sex blind and supportive.

The instruction described herein was developed as part of the activities of Project BECOMING, of which Dr. Evelyn Swartz and the author served as co-directors. The contributions of Dr. Swartz and our colleagues are gratefully acknowledged. The activity which is the subject of this paper was supported in whole or in part by the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Office of Education, and no official endorsement by the Office of Education should be inferred.

Table 1

Goals of Project BECOMING to Instruct Elementary Teachers about Sex Role Stereotyping in the Schools

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Level One - Personal attitudes of teachers toward own roles.

Goal - (1) Express and analyze one's attitudes toward one's own current and future roles as career person, parent, spouse, and citizen.

Level Two - Personal attitudes of teachers toward appropriate roles of people of either sex.

Goal - (2) Express and analyze one's own attitudes toward various traditional and changing conceptions of role of females and males as career person, parent, spouse, and citizen.

(3) Consistently express (and act on the expression) an attitude of tolerance and support of people considering and/or trying out non-traditional roles, attitudes, and behavior.

Level Three - Teacher's understanding of sex role stereotyping in the school setting and the effects of this stereotyping.

Goal - (4) Describe those aspects of the total school setting, such as teacher behaviors, curriculum materials, and school policy, which indicate and/or lead to sex role stereotyping.

Level Four - Teacher's ability to be sex blind and supportive of students considering and/or trying out new roles.

Goal - (5) Describe curricula and teacher behaviors which will develop a more positive self-image among girls and boys and will allow students to consider a variety of childhood and adult roles as possible and acceptable, regardless of sex.

(6) Develop and try out their own units of instruction which either (a) make students aware of the traditional and changing roles of women and men and/or (b) are supportive of girls and boys considering roles and behaviors not traditionally encouraged for their particular sex.

(7) Consistently exhibit teaching behavior which is sex blind and supportive of students considering and/or trying new roles.

Instruction - Twelve modules were developed around typical social studies methods topics. (Table 2 lists the modules as they appeared in the Table of Contents for the instruction for the course.) Since we assumed that undergraduate students were primarily concerned with "how to teach" rather than the fine tuning of how to overcome sexism, in each module we played down sexism as the focus of the lesson and emphasized the particular social studies teaching technique (with sexism used as an illustration of the method). Thus, when we were focusing, for example, on analyzing classroom behavior or curriculum materials, or using a case study as an instructional technique, our preservice teachers were shown and used examples from sex role stereotyping to achieve the particular social studies methods objective (Swartz & Smith, 1977).

Table 2

Twelve Instructional Modules of Project BECOMING

Values Education
- Module One: Picturing Yourself
- Module Two: Sorting Out Your Values

Analysis of Instructional Resources
- Module Three: Analyzing Textbooks
- Module Four: Analyzing Classrooms for Sex Bias

Teaching Strategies:
- Module Five: Hypothesizing from Facts
- Module Six: Interpreting Written Material
- Module Seven: Interpreting Graphic Information
- Module Eight: Decision-Making
- Module Nine: Making Inferences
- Module Ten: Observation Skills
- Module Eleven: Case Study
- Module Twelve: Role-Playing

Experimental Design - The experimental group who used these 12 modules during one semester was compared with three other groups, using a static groups comparison design. Table 3 illustrates these groups and the tests they received. The groups were sections of the undergraduate social studies methods course. Randomization was not possible, due to University policy about course enrollment; so intact groups were used. However, students were unaware of the experiment, so this factor could not have influenced their enrollment.

Table 3

Experimental and Comparison Groups Used in Evaluation of Project BECOMING

Groups	January 1977	February to May 1977	May 1977
Experimental	Pretest ---->	Project BECOMING modules ---->	Posttests
Comparison I - Goals Only	Pretest ---->	Project BECOMING goals only ---->	Posttests
Comparison II - Pre & Posttests	Pretest ---->	No instruction based on Project BECOMING ---->	Posttests
Comparison III - Posttest Only	Placebo Pretest ---->	No instruction based on Project BECOMING ---->	Posttests

The instructor of the first comparison group was given the goals from Table 1, but not the instructional modules, and agreed to attempt to accomplish these goals in the course. The instructor of the second and third comparison groups neither received the list of goals or the modules nor attempted to address sex role stereotyping in the course. The experimental and first two comparison groups completed a pretest and three posttests; and the third comparison group completed only the three posttests.

The pretest, which was repeated as the first posttest, was a written questionnaire regarding attitudes toward and knowledge of sex role stereotyping, especially in the school. The second posttest, a test of sex role ideology (Angrist, Mickelson & Penna, 1976), measured whether subjects were traditional or nontraditional in their conception of sex roles. The final posttest, a written unit lesson plan, required students to present a plan for an elementary school social studies unit of instruction. (Information regarding the standardization of the analysis of the first and third posttests are reported in Smith and Swartz (1977).)

Results and Discussion - Both the pretest and postest results indicated that these elementary majors were less traditional in their views toward the changing roles of people than we had anticipated (Smith & Swartz, 1977). For example, on the sex role orientation posttest the subjects indicated on a five point Likert-like scale their agreement or disagreement with 13 statements such as "married women should not work once they have children" (Angrist, Mickelson & Penna, 1976). Scores could range from 13 to 65 with 39 as the middle score; lower scores indicated traditional views. The posttest results indicated that there elementary majors were neither clearly traditional nor clearly nontraditional in their attitude toward sex roles. Moreover, the four groups did not differ significantly in this attitude following instruction. (See Table 4, page 6.)

That the four groups did not differ significantly on this posttest may indicate the stability of the attitude toward sex roles and its impregnability to instruction. That the attitude toward sex roles was not traditional (and even tended toward the nontraditional) may indicate that the subjects were "ripe" for the modules, thus being ready to learn to plan lessons which supported their students' considering nontraditional roles.

Table 4

Sex Role Orientation of Experimental and Comparison Groups

Preservice Elementary Teachers

	Group	N	Mean	S.D.
1	Experimental	23	46.74	10.83
2	Comparison - Goals Only	12	47.33	8.75
3	Comparison - Pre & Posttests	20	44.50	8.83
4	Comparison - Posttest Only	18	49.22	9.16

Comparison Among Groups

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F
Between	3	214.8164	71.6055	0.780*
Within	69	6335.2109	91.8147	
Total	72	6550.0273		

*Not significant.

Knowledge of sex role stereotyping in the schools was measured by asking the subjects to list examples of these practices. These examples were categorized into one of nine categories (see Table 5); and the groups were compared both in terms of numbers of categories mentioned and for their mention of each particular category.

Table 5

Categories of Elementary School Practices in Which Girls and Boys are Treated Differently

1. Curriculum emphasis (e.g., more stress put on math for boys).
2. Adult roles (e.g., girls are encouraged to think of teaching preschool).
3. Teacher expectations of student characteristics (e.g., teachers expect girls, but not boys, to be demure; and girls are rewarded for this behavior).
4. Grouping (e.g., girls against the boys in a spelling bee).
5. Classroom tasks (e.g., boys run the movie projector).
6. Punishment (e.g., boys are spanked, but girls are not).
7. Standards of disruptive behavior (e.g., girls may talk, but boys may not talk).
8. Extracurricular activities (e.g., only boys can play on the school baseball team and only girls can be cheerleaders).
9. Facilities (e.g., girls and boys use different gyms or restrooms).

On both the pretest and the posttest, the subjects each listed approximately two categories of examples; and there was no significant difference among the groups in these results. The experimental group subjects were no more knowledgeable after instruction about sex role stereotyping practices than were subjects in the comparison groups. That the experimental subjects were no more knowledgeable than comparison subjects may indicate that an

additional knowledge base was not necessary in order to plan nonsexist lessons.

The ultimate purpose of our instruction was to change teacher classroom behavior; but although our subjects were able to observe and assist once a week in an elementary classroom, they rarely had a chance to teach a lesson of their own design. Thus, rather than an observation of each subject's teaching, our final posttest was a written lesson plan on any social studies topic of the subject's choice.

The experimental and comparison groups differed strikingly in their lesson plans. The lesson plans of the experimental group, who had used the 12 modules, much more often actively encouraged and supported their students' considering and trying out nontraditional career roles. (See Table 6, page 9.) The data indicated that the experimental subjects chose more often to deal in their lessons with family roles, but they were not often actively supportive of nontraditional family roles. By comparison, the lesson plans of the other groups rarely dealt with career or family roles.

Conclusions - Preservice elementary teachers were not clearly nontraditional in their attitudes toward historical and changing roles of women and men as career person, parent, spouse, or citizen. However, their attitudes were nontraditional enough so that the instruction which focused on methodology, but subtly illustrated sex role stereotyping, positively affected their teaching plans. Instruction on sex role stereotyping which was closely integrated into a methods course changed preservice teachers so that they became more supportive of their students' considering nontraditional roles. At least this conclusion was true of career roles, which may have been a "safe" stance for preservice teachers to take in the late 1970's. However, the conclusion of preservice teachers' supporting nontraditional roles may not have generalized to family roles of

parent and spouse. Preservice elementary teachers may have been willing to focus on these roles in instruction, but they did not seem ready to advocate any change in traditional family role patterns.

TABLE 6

Attitude of Preservice Elementary Teachers in Support of People Pursuing Nontraditional Career or Family Roles

Nontraditional Career Roles*

Group		***Active Support of Nontrad. 1	Mention of Nontrad. 2	Only Trad. Roles Mentioned 3	Active Support of Trad. Roles 4	Career Roles Not Mentioned 5
Experimental	N	9	1	2	0	4
	%	56.3	6.3	12.5	0.0	25.0
Comparison-Goals Only	N	2	0	2	0	6
	%	20.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	60.0
Comparison-Pre & Posttests	N	0	0	1	2	18
	%	0.0	0.0	4.8	9.5	85.7
Comparison-Posttest	N	0	0	0	0	18
	%	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

Nontraditional Family Roles**

Group		Active Support of Nontrad. 1	Mention of Nontrad. 2	Only Trad. Roles Mentioned 3	Active Support of Trad. Roles 4	Family Roles Not Mentioned 5
Experimental	N	2	1	6	0	7
	%	12.5	6.3	37.5	0.0	43.8
Comparison-Goals Only	N	0	0	1	0	9
	%	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	90.0
Comparison Pre & Posttests	N	1	0	0	1	19
	%	4.8	0.0	0.0	4.8	90.5
Comparison Posttests	N	0	0	1	0	17
	%	0.0	0.0	5.6	0.0	94.4

*χ^2 = 40.34, $p<0.0005$ for career roles.

**χ^2 = 23.66, $p<0.05$ for family roles.

***Categories:

1 = The lesson plan actively supported people trying out or considering nontraditional career (or family) roles.

2 = The lesson plan presented nontraditional career (or family) roles, but the plan neither supported not discouraged people's trying out or considering these nontraditional career (or family) roles.

3 = The lesson plan presented career (or family) roles, but nontraditional career (or family) roles were not presented.

4 = The lesson plan pointedly stated that nontraditional career (or family) roles should be discouraged and/or that traditional career (or family) roles should be encouraged.

5 = The lesson plan did not deal with career (or family) roles.

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